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Detering Rogue Regimes: Rethinking Deterrence Theory and Practice

Center on Contemporary Conflict

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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The CCC's **Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering WMD** is a program planning and implementation office, research center, and intellectual clearinghouse for the execution of future-oriented studies and dialogues for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASC research. For more information, please contact ccc@nps.edu.



Deterring Rogue Regimes: Rethinking Deterrence Theory and Practice

Performer: Stanford University, Center for International Security and Cooperation

Project Lead: Scott D. Sagan

Project Cost: \$197,637

Fiscal Year(s): 2012-2013

Demand:

Many theories on nuclear weapons and deterrence were developed with the USSR in mind. Today, nuclear armed rogue states are the persistent threat. Traditional deterrence theory relies on an accurate understanding of an adversary's cost-benefit calculus, but rogue regimes consistently do not behave as predicted. Instead of relying on a potentially outdated logic, the wealth of newly available documents from Saddam Hussein's Iraq is an opportunity to develop a candid understanding of how rogue regimes truly operate within the domain of deterrence theory.

Objective:

The objective of this research project is to re-evaluate traditional deterrence theory and practice in light of the threats posed from rogue regimes by examining new evidence on decision-making in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. This will provide comparative lessons for U.S. deterrence policy regarding new and existing rogue regimes seeking nuclear weapons.

Approach:

The research will culminate in a workshop held in the Middle East with former U.S. officials, former senior members of Iraq's Revolutionary Guard Corps, and several members of Saddam Hussein's inner circle. The workshop and follow-on report will center efforts on understanding Iraqi decision-making regarding WMD, and American and Iraqi perceptions of each other's military intentions and capabilities throughout the Saddam era. From this, lessons for future U.S. policy toward rogue regimes can be ascertained.

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